

PROBLEMS FACED BY INDONESIAN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS WHILE TEACHING ENGLISH AT ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL IN THAILAND AND THEIR COPING STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to understand the problems faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers in teaching English as a foreign language at Islamic Boarding School, in Thailand. This research used descriptive qualitative to collect the data, the participants were four Indonesian pre-service teachers studying in semester 7 from the English Department at the University of Islam Malang who completed a teaching practicum in Thailand for one month in 2022. The researcher collected data through online interviews via Zoom Meeting. The research revealed several problems faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers during their practicum. This included difficulty communicating with students, a lack of student focus on delivering material, cultural differences, and class conditions. To address these issues, the Indonesian pre-service teachers spent more time learning about Thai culture and adapting to the student's needs. Additionally, the study found that class conditions were quite boring, so the pre-service teachers tried to speak Indonesian, use body language, play games, and speak softly to get students' attention again. Limited teaching hours also contributed to the challenges faced by the teachers. To improve their teaching methods, the teachers joined activities outside the classroom and made the material easier for students to finish the lesson faster. Overall, the research highlights the problems faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers in teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand and offers valuable insights for future educators.

Keywords: Pre-service teachers, Problems in teaching English practicum, Thailand Islamic boarding school, coping strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Pre-service teachers' teaching practicum experiences are crucial for improving teacher education and addressing classroom management issues. Teachers must be educated and trained to perform their duties effectively, selecting appropriate methods to help students acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes for teaching. Constant training in teaching is essential for maximum efficiency and meeting professional standards. These experiences contribute to the development of effective teaching strategies and skills. Muengmun, (2018) Teaching experience training is crucial for vocational education management, as it equips teachers with the knowledge and skills to perform real tasks. However, the lack of teaching skills among pre-service teachers is a significant issue, often due to insufficient training in teaching techniques and methods. Immediate action is needed to address this issue, as poor quality can negatively impact teaching and learning in the classroom. Training experience provides pre-service teachers with teaching skills before graduation, allowing them to integrate their theoretical knowledge and experiences into real teaching in educational institutions. This leads to knowledge and expertise according to professional standards, enabling them to work as high-class teachers.

Teaching and learning serve as a compass for students, requiring instructors to select suitable training methods for different ages. As the nation's education system faces challenges,

teachers must study their roles and purpose to be more effective. Coaching and supervision are crucial roles in the education system. According to Pinthong, (2018) Teachers are responsible for implementing national education plans in classrooms, and their quality directly impacts national education quality. The Faculty of Education must prepare pre-service teachers to effectively manage learning according to specified standards. Quality control and graduate production standards ensure high-quality graduates.

Teaching English in non-native countries is challenging, making international teaching practicum problems an interesting research topic. University-based programs for English as a Foreign Language teachers, particularly in Southeast Asian nations, are increasingly focusing on international teaching practicums. This trend requires university-based EFL teacher education programs with global networking to provide pre-service teachers with better cross-cultural understanding and experience while teaching English as a foreign language abroad.

Teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand and Indonesia has been ongoing for decades, but it is still not as successful as it should be due to a focus on grammar and vocabulary memorization rather than everyday communication. Referring to Yamalee, (2020) Learning English in Thailand uses formal learning in the classroom, while Indonesia's teaching is classified as a foreign language and primarily classroom-based as well. This new language learning requires more instruction to improve cognition and help learners apply their knowledge effectively in their daily lives.

For this reason, Indonesia has promoted a system of production processes and the development of teachers, faculty, and educational personnel to have quality standards suitable for high professionals. The University of Islam Malang is responsible for producing and developing teachers, as well as educational personnel to be ready and strong in preparing new personnel and continuously developing permanent personnel, and saw that it was an absolute necessity for Indonesia to develop its personnel in the nation to have knowledge English proficiency to understand, able to communicate, know how to choose useful information that can be used correctly, and it will be useful in the future development of the country.

Everyone has made an effort to reduce the problems, but unfortunately, only few people can solve the difficulties and challenges in teaching and learning English. Many English teachers and pre-service teachers face difficulties in teaching and learning English, preventing students from fully acquiring the language. Students often complain about unclearness and difficulty at various school levels. Lack of fundamental knowledge leads to problems, which can arise in any situation, and when we look at the origin of a problem, we can see that all problems can all be solved. The researcher acknowledges the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English, primarily due to neglect in pre-service teacher training. Neglecting this training leads to various problems, as graduates often face difficulties when transitioning to teaching professions. If the education system does not focus on the training of pre-service teachers. Of course, they would get problems when they graduate and become a real teacher. Previous studies mainly focus on Indonesian pre-service teachers' issues in teaching English at primary schools in Thailand, but no study addresses their problems at an Islamic boarding school.

For this reason, the researcher decided to study the problems faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers during their experience training at the school and their coping strategies in 2022 to assess their quality before serving. If bugs are found, the researcher will propose guidelines for problem-solving, development, and improvement to ensure the quality meets standards. This information will be useful for the development of the Bachelor of Teacher Training and Education English Program at the University of Islam Malang and the researcher's education program in Teaching English.

METHOD

The objective of the study was directly connected with the problem of the study. The objectives of this study are intended to find out the problems faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers in teaching English as a Foreign Language in Thailand and describe how Indonesian pre-service teachers cope with those problems. This research used qualitative descriptive to collect the data, the researcher conducted the research to know the problems faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers and the way that they cope with the problem.

It was categorized as qualitative research because the result of this research was interpreted into sentences. According to Husni, (2020) descriptive terms derive from the English term to describe which means describing a thing, such as circumstances, conditions, situations, events, and others. Participants were 4 pre-service teachers who are studying in the 7th semester from the English department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Islam Malang. They were selected to train in Thailand for 1 month of teaching experience, where they have a schedule to teach twice a week or total of 8 meetings over the course. In this research, the researcher used interviews as a technique to collect the data to find out the problems encountered by pre-service teachers in teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand and how to cope with the problems. The researcher made the research tools to describe overall problems such as classroom conditions, the obstacles that they faced in teaching English during their teaching experience in Thailand, and their coping strategies through the following step: The researcher wrote the interview form start with open ended interview ask some questions related to the research question, then took the interview draft to consult with the advisor 1. The researcher took the interview draft to be validated with the other 2 lecturers, and corrections the interview form according to 2 lecturer's recommendations. Took the interview form to consult with advisor II and revised an interview form according to advisor II recommendation.

The data collection for this research was the interview, the researcher collected the data by interviewing online via Zoom application. The interview consisted of nine questions aimed to clarify the contents of the problems that Indonesian pre-service teachers faced during teaching practicum in Thailand and their coping strategies in a descriptive format. The interview aimed to clarify the contents of the problems that Indonesian pre-service teachers faced during teaching practicum in Thailand and their coping strategies. The researcher used informed consent as a means of contacting participants to ensure their willingness to answer questions related to the purpose of the study including communication, students' motivation, cultural differences, classroom conditions, and limited teaching time. The researcher made an appointment with the participants. Every participant was scheduled for an interview, depending on the participants' readiness. Each interview was last for about 7 minutes. The researcher followed several steps in analysing the data.

Firstly, the researcher transcript the result of the interview record. Second, the researcher read transcript the result of interview. Third, the researcher classified types of pre-service teachers' answer from an interview by categorizing it based on their groups, such as classroom conditions, obstacles in teaching English, cultural differences, feeling in teaching English as a foreign language, Students' interest, and limited hours for teaching. Fourth, analysis to find out the problems encountered by Indonesian pre-service teacher in teaching English as a foreign language and the way to cope the problems. Fifth, this is the last step, the researcher made a conclusion of the result to explain a common problem encountered by Indonesian pre-service teacher in teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand and the way that pre-service teacher cope with those problems.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Problems faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers while teaching English as a foreign language at Islamic boarding school in Thailand and their coping strategies.

The researcher was analyzing the data from the pre-service teachers' experience strategies among 4 participants for dealing the problems. Based on the analysis of the interview for all 9 questions the pre-service teachers gave the answer and opinions, the researcher found that there are

5 problems that they faced and many strategies used by Indonesian pre-service teachers to overcome the problems and difficulties in teaching English at Islamic Boarding School in Thailand, all of them gave opinions below:

a. Communication obstacles in teaching English.

The researcher asked the question below, then the researcher got the participants' answer as follow:

- What obstacles did you always faced in delivering material in the class? And how did you deal with it?

P1: Communication. I got difficulty in delivering material to the student, because not all students can understand English. So, sometimes we asked help to the teacher of the class to delivered what I mean.

P2: The obstacle that I faced when delivering material is communication, since I have different language with them. Moreover, I did not master their language. I tried to communicate by using Indonesian and body language. And I tried to show pictures or videos so that they be able to understand it better.

P3: Communication is a barrier that I experience because me and my students are from the country where English is not spoken, so I have difficulty conveying material, then the solution is to use picture and try to explain with common English language or easy vocabulary that they know.

P4: When I was teaching the class there were some difficulties I experienced. Especially communication, in the structural facet of sentences, accents, and language differences of the total miscommunication between students with me, so I try to let them watch some videos or play games, and sometimes I ask the advisor to translate what I want to tell the students.

From the interview results above It was found that all four of them had the same problem, which was difficulty in communicating.

b. Students' motivation

- Did your students interest in learning English? How would you act to students who don't like English lessons?

P1: To be honest, most of the students do not like learning English because they feel shy if they speak or say something wrong, so I give them encouragement and inspiration, for example we are learning together, do not be afraid to do mistake, the more we do mistake, the more we learn and improve ourselves.

P2: Most of the students do not like learning English because they have a prejudice in their mind that English is difficult, and they are afraid to speak English because they feel embarrassed if they say it wrong, because they are not interested to learn, so they are lazy to practice English. I give them encouragement and inspiration, for example English is necessary for us nowadays, and English is not difficult at all, we are not native speakers, so it's normal if we did mistake or say something wrong.

P3: Not really, the students do not like learning English, they do not think that English is important for today, and also they could not get enough news or information from social media because it is not allow them to use the phone in EKP Islamic boarding school, for those reason they do not focus on the material, sometimes they secretly eat snack and enjoy talking behind the class, For the solution I let them watch some videos that shown how important of English for this era and I give them inspiration like English is funny if you open your heart to lean it, and it is necessary for us today's society.

P4: Very less interest, they do not like English language because they think English is difficult and they feel shy to express themselves, so I give them an advice and inspiration about English language.

From the interview results above, it was found that the four pre-service teachers encountered a problem that students did not like to learn English and did not pay attention to study.

c. Cultural differences

- Did cultural differences affect your teaching? Please tell me how did you deal with it?

P1: Yes, sometimes I didn't have the confidence to teach because of cultural differences, and I was also afraid I won't fit in with the students there, so the advisor recommends me to learn more about culture there by myself and I follow them.

P2: Yes, I was very nervous since they are from another country with different cultures and different languages, but when I teach in the class I find out that the culture is not a big different for example, the students did not Salam and kiss my hand, and they use their left hand to give me the book or anything, so I could say that it is almost no effect on my teaching, the solution is I prepared myself from my room and trying my best to make myself confident and learning their cultures little by little.

P3: No, I did not

P4: Yes, but it is not a big deal, because the students were very friendly and understood that I was just a visitor. I spend more time to learn their culture and I try to adapt to the students more.

From the interview results above Three out of four pre-service teachers were found to be nervous and afraid of cultural differences.

d. Classroom conditions

- How was the condition of the class when you did the learning process?

P1: It was good from the beginning, but it is quite boring when the students do not understand the lesson, I do not know what should I do and I felt not good because I think maybe it is my fault that I cannot have a good communication with them and make them lost attention to me, so I tried to speak Indonesian, if it does not work, I tried to use body language

P2: It was excited and everything was fine, but sometimes they are sleepy when they cannot understand the lesson, so I try to play games to get their attention again

P3: Well, everything was fine, but sometimes they are noise so I try to speak softly to them and get their attention again.

P4: Everything was good Alhamdulillah

From the interview results above, there are only two out of four pre-service teachers were found to be unable to manage their classes. That made the class boring.

e. Limited teaching time

- Did you have a problem with insufficient teaching time? Then how did you solve it?

P1: Nothing, I don't have problem with it

P2: Yes, I didn't have much time for teaching, I only have 45 minutes to handle with everything include communications' problem, and classroom management, so I was not able to socialize with the students. That's why I tried to get closer to them by joining their activities outside of school. I went to their rooms, we studied and read Al-quran together, and I talked a lot with them.

P3: No, I don't have any problem, the time fit with the number of students, so I can handle it myself.

P4: Yes, because it happened that the performance of the student school was taking the semester exam. To solve it, I make the material easier and I can finish the lesson faster

From the interview results above, it was found that two out of four pre-commissioned teachers faced the problem of insufficient teaching time.

Based on the statements from the results of the four pre-service teachers' answers above showed that communication is the most common problem that pre-service teachers faced, and it causes many problems such as students not attend lessons, it makes the class boring, the student sleepy, the students making noise.

Discussion

Communication is a barrier that they faced because they have different languages according to Yulia, (2019) most of Indonesian pre-service teachers got difficulty in communicating with Thai learners caused of different languages. The pre-service teacher and students come from countries where English is a foreign language, such as Thailand and Indonesia. The pre-service teachers speak their mother language, while the students speak Thai 100 percent in school. This is due to factors like limited English exposure in their environment, especially in Islamic boarding schools, and the teachers speaking the full Thai language in English classes. Additionally, differences in sentence structure and accents cause miscommunication between the students and the pre-service teachers. The pre-service teachers also lack mastery of the students' language, causing difficulties in delivering material to the students, despite receiving training from advisors. For the solutions, Pre-service teachers use various methods to communicate with students, including using common English language, class advisor assistance, Indonesian language, body language, visual aids, and engaging games. They also use pictures, videos, and games to enhance understanding and enjoyment of the lesson. These strategies aim to engage students and ensure a successful learning experience.

The second problem faced by the Indonesian pre-service teacher in teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand is the student's motivation. Many students struggle with learning English due to prejudices about the language's difficulty. This fear of self-expression and shyness can hinder their focus on the material and daily practice. Interest is crucial for success in learning,

and even the best English teacher can be meaningless without it. Many students struggle with learning English due to prejudices about the language's difficulty. This fear of self-expression and shyness can hinder their focus on the material and daily practice. Interest is crucial for success in learning, and even the best English teacher can be meaningless without it. Husni's (2020) study highlights the importance of students' interest and concentration in learning English. For the solution, Pre-service teachers offer encouragement, advice, and inspiration to students, encouraging them to learn together and not be afraid of mistakes. They emphasize the importance of English in today's world and encourage students to watch videos showcasing its importance. English is not difficult, enjoyable, and not native speakers' faults, making it normal for them to make mistakes

The third problem faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers is cultural differences' problem. Only 3 pre-service teachers experienced cultural differences, causing nervousness, loss of confidence, and fear of not fitting in with students in Thailand. This is relevant to previous study by Chasanah, (2022) the challenge that pre-service teachers face is adapting to the local language and culture. Three of four pre-service teachers struggled with teaching English due to cultural differences. Indonesian and Thai cultures, both Muslim, have minimal differences in teaching and learning. Students often use their left hand for tasks, but these differences do not significantly impact teaching and learning. The pre-service teachers were more anxious and afraid of themselves than the actual issue from a different culture. For the solution, the advisor suggests pre-service teachers learn Thai culture independently, preparing themselves and gaining confidence, gradually adapting to students.

The fourth problem faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers in teaching English in Thailand is the classroom conditions problem. Three out of four pre-service teachers experienced classroom conditions problems, with good beginnings and boring end. Students were sleepy and noisy, making both teachers and students uncomfortable. Pre-service teachers worried about their teaching skills, and students felt bored when they didn't understand the teacher's message refer to the previous study Husni, (2020) class condition is very boring. In this situation, teachers and students cannot feel comfortable while they are learning process. For the solutions, three participants faced classroom conditions problems and solved them by speaking Indonesian, using body language, and playing games. One participant tried softly speaking to regain attention.

The fifth problem that Indonesian pre-service teachers encountered in teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand is problems in insufficient teaching time. Only 2 out of 4 pre-service teachers face issues with limited teaching time, particularly for international teachers who teach students from different countries. With only 45 minutes to handle class tasks, communication issues, and classroom management, this time is insufficient for effective student-teacher interactions. As stated by Husni, (2020) the time allocation provided material is not enough. English is given four hours a week for one class and each hour lasts for 45 minutes. For the solutions, one participant attempted to connect with students by joining outside activities, while other participant made the material easier for faster lesson completion.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research study on the problems faced by Indonesian pre-service teachers while teaching English as a foreign language at Islamic Boarding School, Thailand and their coping strategies. Found that the first problem is Indonesian pre-service teachers got difficulty communicating with Thai students. To solve it, they tried to communicate by using the Indonesian language, body language, show pictures or videos to make students understand it better, and sometimes they play games relevant to the materials. The second problem is students struggle with concentration in class, hindering their ability to deliver material effectively. To address this, emphasize the importance of the English language in today's society, offer encouragement, advice, and inspiration, encourage mistakes, and encourage students to watch videos showcasing its significance. The third problem is cultural differences, to solve it, the pre-service teachers learning more about Thai culture and

preparing themselves to adapt to students gradually. The fourth problem is the lass's boring condition due to communication difficulties. To address this, they try speaking Indonesian, using body language, and playing games, aiming to get students' attention again. And the last problem is limited hours. The solution is to try to get closer to the students by joining their activities outside the class and making the material easier and faster completion.

Based on the discussion and conclusion, the researcher would like to give some suggestions to the English teacher, student, school administrators, new pre-service teachers, and future researchers as follow: Suggestions for English teachers. Teachers should try to understand students who lack enthusiasm for learning English. Teachers should search for teaching styles and choose to use teaching materials that meet students' needs in order to encourage students to be more interested in learning. Suggestions for school administrators. school administrators should be supported by providing sufficient teaching and learning materials for both teachers and students. Alternatively, students may be allowed to use their phones for certain periods of time. This is useful for students to increase their knowledge and language skills. Suggestions for the new pre-service teacher who coming to teaching practicum at the Islamic boarding school. You should learn and prepare yourself to speak the Thai language and Thai culture before coming to the actual classroom. so as not to waste time and cause difficulties in teaching and learning. Suggestions for the Students. Students must be practicing and learn more and more about English language to be given a chance from many aspects in the future. Suggestion for the future researcher to investigate more aspect in the case of problems that pre-service teachers faced and trying to find more diverse, better and more effective ways to solve problems.

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